



Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 22, 2007
Wisconsin Rapids City Council Chambers
9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

LRSC Members Present

Wisconsin Counties Association:

Dan Fedderly
Dick Leffler
Emmer Shields
Bruce Stelzner

WisDOT Staff Present:

Michael Erickson
Mary Forlenza

Wisconsin Towns Association:

Arlyn Helm
Gene Lueck
Terry McMahon

Wisconsin Alliance of Cities:

Dave Botts
Rick Jones
Jeff Mantes
Paula Vandehey

**Regional Planning Commissions/
Metro Planning Organizations:**

Joni Graves
Sheldon Johnson
Walt Raith

Others Present:

Scot Becker (WisDOT – OPBF)
Bill Bremer (FHWA)
Tom Huber (WisDOT – BOP)
Mike Hess
Tracey McKenney (FHWA)
Xiao Qin (UW – Madison TOPS)

League of Wisconsin Municipalities:

Dennis Jordan

LRSC Members Excused:

Jeffrey Agee – Aguayo
Bill Beil, Jr.
Marilyn Bhend

Opening business (Paula Vandehey, Mary Forlenza)

The meeting was called to order.

Welcome new LRSC member

Mary welcomed new council member Sheldon Johnson. Sheldon is a transportation planner for the Northwest WI Regional Planning Commission.

Review & approve December 7, 2006 minutes

Minutes from the December 7, 2006 meeting were reviewed and accepted with several edits to be completed before posting to the LRSC Web site.

Committee membership & dates

Joni Graves has accepted the position of chair of the Education and Communication (E&C) committee. Joni met with WisDOT staff to discuss projects the E&C committee will begin this year. Dennis Jordan will chair the Regulatory, Environmental and Legislative (REAL) committee. Former REAL committee chair Emmer Shields will work with Dennis to complete REAL committee projects initiated during the last few years, including: (1) formalizing a single point of contact with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on local projects; (2) addressing oversize and overweight trucking issue; and (3) establishing wetland banking policies for local projects.

Lori Richter has replaced Scott Bush as WisDOT staff to the Finance committee. Finance committee chair Rick Jones will serve as lead on the General Transportation Aids (GTA) incentive proposal. Rick and Lori will continue working to get this policy approved. Lori has begun updating the GTA brochure to reflect changes since the last update in 2005, and will be drafting modifications to the line codes used by local units of government to report their transportation costs to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR). The intent of these proposed changes will be to distinguish between local road improvements and maintenance costs using the same definitions as the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR).

The council will be nominating two new members from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities (LWM). Once these individuals have been appointed, committee assignments will be made.

Chairs and committee members scheduled 2007 meeting dates over lunch.

Recap of March 5, 2007 meeting with WisDOT Secretary (Paula)

Paula Vandehey gave an overview of the meeting with the WisDOT Secretary Frank Busalacchi and Deputy Secretary Ruben Anthony. Paula reported that Secretary Busalacchi was receptive and appreciative of the council's work. Committee chairs that attended the meeting updated the Secretary on current LRSC activities and requested WisDOT's input and assistance with these initiatives.

The Secretary reaffirmed WisDOT's staffing and funding commitment to support the council's activities. The Secretary also asked the LRSC to assist in providing public information regarding the safety and importance of roundabouts. WisDOT is committed to consideration

of roundabouts in intersection improvements, and would appreciate the council's assistance in communicating the benefits of roundabouts.

The Secretary praised WISLR, and reported that local units of government are increasingly using this electronic process to certify their local roads. The Secretary would like to see the LRSC take a lead in promoting WISLR and explaining to local units of government how to use its newly implemented budgeting and mapping functions to improve their local roads system management.

The Secretary gave a brief overview of WisDOT's 2007-2009 biennial budget request, which provides increases to GTA, the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP), local transit aids, and maintenance fees to counties.

Mary Forlenza commented that the Secretary also talked about the upcoming national meeting of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). This year, WisDOT is sponsoring the meeting, which will be held in Milwaukee in September 2007. The Secretary would like to showcase WISLR and the LRSC, with emphasis on the local/state partnership.

****The Secretary commends this relationship for improving the public's understanding of issues faced by local governments and for streamlining processes, such as providing the single point of contact on local projects. The DNR is utilizing this process with success in two of the WisDOT transportation regions. DNR has requested three additional staff to implement this process statewide in their biennial budget proposal. Current administrative assistant to the DNR Secretary (and former administrative assistant at WisDOT) Randy Romanski's understanding of this issue may facilitate approval of this request. The Secretary recommended contacting Randy regarding any DNR issues affecting local transportation systems or projects.**

Rich Jones informed the committee that the Secretary continues to support the GTA incentive proposal being drafted by the Finance Committee. GTA funding has remained steady for several years. This proposal could encourage local governments to use WISLR for their pavement submittals and start using WISLR's best management tools to demonstrate GTA's value to the local roads system. The Secretary supports reviewing the urban/rural split of Surface Transportation Program Funding (STP).

Emmer Shields reiterated that the Secretary supports the single point of contact with DNR, as well as the payments in lieu of wetlands mitigation proposal. The Council needs to follow up on the Facilities Development Manual (FDM) review by counties and local governments.

Emmer expressed his concern to the Secretary about Act 165, which permits transporting raw forest products up to 98,000 pounds on the local roads system, provided the truck has a fifth axle. The LRSC is concerned that these new weight limitations may be enacted during the upcoming legislative session for other commercial trucking, such as waste haulers, cement and aggregate trucks, and agricultural products trucks. Act 165 was enacted without additional funding for enforcement. This issue is a concern for the local roads system as well as local bridges throughout the state.

Emmer reported on a bill introduced in the legislature, which would require local governments to issue a declaration on their frozen roads. Along with this legislation, the suspension of weight limitations will also be voided once WisDOT has determined that the spring thaw has occurred. This means local units of government would have to post their roads in order to ban these oversize/over-weight trucks from their roads and bridges. The rule, if approved by the legislature, would require local units of government to be proactive in protecting their systems rather than WisDOT, which normally would control these declarations on a statewide basis.

Walt Raith asked if Act 165 applied to the Interstate system's current weight limitations. Emmer explained that the current weight limitation of 80,000 pounds still applies to the Interstate system. Several members of the LRSC expressed their concerns about the impact this will have on the local roads system. Dan Fedderly commented that this is currently a northern Wisconsin issue; once new weight limits start affecting the local roads system in southeastern Wisconsin, this issue will begin to resonate in the legislature. Dan stated that LRSC and WisDOT might need to work together to modify Act 165.

Joni Graves expressed her intention to the WisDOT Secretary to provide local governments with information concerning WISLR, its new budget tools, and other system features. Joni told the Secretary she uses WISLR regularly and has found it to be an excellent data resource for the local roads system. Joni would like to talk to local governments currently using the system and get their opinions and stories concerning WISLR and then report on their responses in an upcoming LRSC newsletter.

Summary of spring WISLR training (Mary Forlenza)

The first round of WISLR training was completed in February at several locations around the state. During the morning, the training provided lessons on using the Paser ratings to rate roads and submit that data to WisDOT electronically. In the afternoon, participants learned how to use WISLR system tools and functions. Trainers included Susie Forde from WisDOT, Steve Pudloski from UW- Transportation Center and Joe Nestler, who helped develop WISLR at WisDOT and now works for a private consultant group. A WISLR manual was provided to all participants. The training sessions were well attended and will be offered again in the fall of this year. Many members of the LRSC attended these sessions and offered their positive feedback.

Many participants would have liked more advance notice on training sessions. WisDOT is working with associations and through the LRSC newsletter to provide better information concerning the fall training sessions.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements (Tom Huber, WisDOT – BOP)

Tom Huber provided an overview of the ADA requirements as they pertain to local projects. ADA requirements apply to all projects involving new or altered pedestrian facilities, not just projects funded by state or federal sources. Local governments consider ADA requirements prior to beginning any locally funded projects, as well as projects with state or federal funding. This applies to new projects as well as reconstruction and remedial/alteration projects.

The U.S. Access Board has drafted standards for pedestrian facilities within the public right-of-way. Many standards already approved for building sites and various transportation facilities are already addressed in the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Many of ADA

requirements depend on Average Daily Traffic (ADT), location of the transportation facility, and are specific to physical terrain or environment.

Tom provided a handout and presentation demonstrating facilities types requiring ADA compliance. Tom demonstrated a number of ADA solutions, including:

- Curb ramps and domes
- Sidewalks and driveways
- Sidewalk surfaces
- Path/trails
- Crossings
- Accessible pedestrian signals (APS)

Tom pointed out that it is the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) role to ensure compliance with accessibility requirements. If an accessibility problem or deficiency is brought to the attention of FHWA, and the problem cannot be resolved, a complaint may be brought to the attention of the Federal Department of Justice as a civil rights violation. WisDOT is charged with oversight of any projects using state or federal funding through the various programs managed by the state.

FHWA's accessibility oversight role (Bill Bremer – FHWA)

Bill Bremer emphasized that ADA requirements are derived from Civil Rights Legislation. FHWA is charged with oversight of pedestrian accessibility requirements. Since 1978, FHWA has promoted accessible transportation systems through technical assistance and guidance, regardless of whether federal funding was used on the project. FHWA is responsible for the implementation of pedestrian access requirements from the ADA 1990 and Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). These rules have been strengthened over time as a result of court findings.

ADA and Section 504 do not require public agencies to provide pedestrian facilities. However, where pedestrian facilities do exist, they must be accessible. FHWA works with WisDOT to educate local governments to meet these requirements. In 2000, FHWA provided technical guidance to integrate facilities for pedestrians, including persons with disabilities, into the transportation infrastructure. USDOT adopted new ADAAG guidelines, effective fall 2006, and is developing guidance on Public Right-of-Way Access rules (PROWAC).

Consideration must be given to bicycle and pedestrian needs in the design of new and improved transportation facilities. State and local governments with 50 or more employees must develop an ADA Plan to identify deficiencies and schedule accessibility upgrades to address them. These plans were required by 1992, and must be updated periodically to incorporate new standards or FHWA requirements. Bill stressed that ADA requirements should be incorporated into any new construction projects to the extent technically feasible, without regard to cost. These requirements also apply to alteration projects, including reconstruction, rehabilitation, structural resurfacing, and widening, and signal installation. Bill noted that maintenance is not considered an alteration and thus is not required to comply with ADA requirements; however, work zones that may occur during these maintenance projects are required to meet ADA rules and accommodate persons with disabilities.

Connections 2030 update (Aileen Switzer, WisDOT – BOP)

Aileen was not able to attend the LRSC meeting because of a prior commitment. Mary Forlenza gave the committee an update on what has occurred since the December meeting. Mary informed the council that some of the delay in the 2030 plan is a result of concerns raised by the WisDOT's Secretary's office. A draft – *Local Roads Section of the Connection 2030* report was circulated internally for review and comments. The Bureau of Local Roads and Transit, Rails and Harbors (BTLRH) will provide the Bureau of Planning (BOP) with feedback on the current draft.

BOP will conduct public outreach sessions concerning the plan around the state beginning in June. Major topics of interest in the local roads section of the plan include:

- Oversize/overweight trucks.
- WISLR, its development and use by local governments.
- Current and future transportation corridors in the state and how they interact with the local system (i.e., economic development issues).

Mary will ask Aileen to brief the council at the June meeting on Connection 2030's local roads section.

New agenda item - Request for additional technical topics for presentation to the LRSC - (Mary Forlenza – WisDOT)

Mary asked the council to suggest technical resources they would like to see in future meetings. Following is a list of ideas:

- Railroads and issues concerning local projects. (i.e., right-of-ways and their impact on projects).
- Wetlands proposal - Army Corps of Engineers.
- Real estate acquisitions.
- Clean Water Act – current policies and changes (i.e., navigable waterways)
- Legislative updates.
- Rules and regulations concerning utilities and local projects.
- Oversize/overweight truck issue – ask officials or staff who worked on the Minnesota Study to speak about their experience with this issue.
- Weight enforcement issues and problems – ask State Patrol personnel to address these with the council.
- New local bridge rules – have a bridge engineer speak to the council.

Mary presented two action items from the last council meeting:

- Mary distributed a report from DTSD showing the number of projects completed during the last six years on local projects in excess of \$100,000. Dan Fedderly requested this report because WisDOT is instituting a policy addressing utility project cost reimbursements on local projects. Of the sixteen projects listed in the report, only three exceeded \$100,000.
- Prior to the meeting Mary talked to MPO/RPC representatives about providing contractor funding for planning Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) and qualifying MPOs and RPCs for funding assisting in this type of work.

Mary will use the list of suggestions above as a guide for booking future speakers for meetings and will add to the list any additional topics suggested by the council.

Federal & state budget update (Jim Donlin, WisDOT – OPBF)

Jim Donlin from WisDOT's Office of Policy, Budget and Finance (OPBF) provided an overview of federal and state budgets and what local governments may expect in the 2007-2009 biennium.

Jim informed the council that additional federal dollars are being distributed back to Wisconsin this year because the federal government did not pass as many earmark projects during the last federal budget appropriations cycle. The state should gain additional monies through the federal formulas used to determine final funding levels. If there is more than a 5 percent difference compared to original estimates, WisDOT will be required to resubmit a federal plan to both the legislature and FHWA for spending approval for these funds. OPBF expects to complete their calculations within two to three weeks.

In addition, the new Democratic leadership is promising to have an approved transportation spending bill in time for the next federal budget cycle. Compared to the last few years of continuing budget resolutions, this would be a dramatic change in how the congress has been funding the federal transportation program. The bad news on the federal side is that the federal trust fund may be in deficit by the end of 2009 unless the federal government changes how it funds this account. This could result in the state of Wisconsin losing up to a third of its current federal funding level.

The Governor has submitted his 2007-2009 biennial budget to the legislature. Some of the highlights of the proposal (each of the two years):

- 2% increase in GTA payments to local governments.
- 2% increase in transit aids.
- 2% for aeronautics assistance.
- 2% increase in the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP).
- 2.5% increase in maintenance to counties - \$66 million over the two-years.
- 1.5% increases for the major collectors.
- 2% increase for State Highway Rehabilitation program.
- \$2.4 million to restore the Surface Transportation Program (STP-D) – Discretionary for 2008 (1year).

WisDOT did not request increased funding for the Local Programs (STP) and Local Bridge Program.

Each of these requests depends on proposed revenue increases in the WisDOT budget. The biggest increase would come from a tax on oil revenues from distributors, which could generate up to \$270 million additional revenues to the state. The Governor is also requesting an increase of \$20 for vehicle and light truck registrations, and a \$140 million transfer of funds to WisDOT from other state agencies. He is also recommending a \$10 increase in driver license fees and surcharges on supplemental title fees to address new state required as a result of the federally mandated national identification (Real ID program) standards

The DNR's three additional positions to help with the single point of contact is addressed in DNR's proposed budget and will therefore have no effect on WisDOT's proposed budget. The Department of Administration (DOA) estimates that a \$30 million balance remains in the

transportation fund, with the vast majority of these dollars going to the major highway projects currently underway (i.e., the Marquette Interchange).

Automated mapping of local roads system crashes using WISLR (Xiao Qin, UW – TOPS)

Xiao Qin from the Traffic Operations and Safety (TOPS) laboratory at the University of Wisconsin-Madison presented the results of a pilot project using WISLR mapping capabilities and crash data from TOPS to automate crash mapping. Xiao's technical presentation is available as an MS-PowerPoint presentation by request from Michael Erickson in the BTLR.

The purpose of the project was to develop the computer processes and program to incorporate crash data into the WISLR platform, validate it, and use WISLR to map crashes for any local government in the state. The TOPS team will continue refining the program to increase its validity in future versions. Xiao will keep the LRSC posted on their progress and report back once the project is complete and the tool is put into production for use in WISLR.

Closing business

Draft agenda for next LRSC meeting:

- Technical assistance issues (i.e., working with railroads)
- Status of the local programs – finance, schedule, and approvals.
- Discuss local program issues from the Southeast Regional Symposium and the upcoming North Central Regional symposium.
- Connections 2030 update.
- State budget update.
- Develop schedules for 2007.
- Committee updates.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.